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Analysis: Catholic church attacks multiply following Supreme Court leak



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The damaged altar of St. Augustine Catholic Church in Brooklyn, New York City, N.Y. | DeSales Media Group



By Katie Yoder

Washington, D.C. Newsroom, May 31, 2022 / 17:49 pm

The U.S. bishops first began noticing — and tracking — a growing number of attacks targeting Catholic churches in 2020. In recent weeks, following the leak of a Supreme Court draft in a highly-anticipated abortion case, that number has accelerated.

The May 2 **leak of a Supreme Court draft opinion** in the abortion case **Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization** suggests that justices are preparing to overturn Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion nationwide in 1973.

Abortion supporters and groups have long criticized the Catholic Church's teaching that abortion kills an unborn human person with inherent dignity and worth. At the same time, pro-abortion groups such as **Ruth Sent Us** — which has called for disrupting churches following the leak — has complained that a majority of the justices are Catholic.

According to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, which **tracks** arson, vandalism, and other destruction occurring at U.S. Catholic churches, there have been at least 134 incidents across 35 states and Washington, D.C., since May 2020.

Their list does not yet include the latest reported incident at a Brooklyn parish.

May 27, 2022: New York

A gold tabernacle estimated by police to be worth \$2 million **was stolen** from St. Augustine Catholic Church in Brooklyn. The Diocese of Brooklyn also **revealed** on May 29 that "the Holy Eucharist housed inside the Tabernacle was thrown all over the altar."

The diocese said that the burglar “cut through a metal protective casing” to take the late 19th-century tabernacle on or around May 27. A safe in the sacristy was also cut open, but it was empty.

The angels located on both sides of the tabernacle, the diocese added, “were decapitated and destroyed.”

According to the diocese, the New York City Police Department is investigating the crime “of disrespect and hate.”

May 22, 2022: Washington

The Archdiocese of Seattle confirmed to CNA that St. Michael Parish in Olympia was vandalized with the words “Abort the church” spray-painted on a wall on May 22. On a post at Puget Sound Anarchists, **the Bo Brown Memorial Cell of Jane’s Revenge claimed responsibility for the attack**, along with attacks on three other, non-Catholic churches.

May 19, 2022: Florida

10 relics have disappeared from St. Elizabeth Seton Catholic Church in Naples, Florida, a CBS affiliate, **WINK**, reported. The relics include include a piece of Christ’s cross, a piece of St. Joseph’s clothing, a piece of the Virgin Mary’s veil, and bone fragments from multiple saints.

While the local sheriff’s office said that they cannot verify whether the items were stolen or lost, the church believes it is unlikely that someone misplaced them.

May 17, 2022: New York

Vandals beheaded and smashed statues in an Our Lady of Fatima Grotto at Our

Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in New York City, according to a media advisory from the Archdiocese of New York.

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May 9, 2022: Texas

In Katy, Texas, a Catholic priest said that someone attempted to desecrate the Eucharist at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. A local **Fox affiliate** reported Father Peter Damian Harris, pastor at Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Houston, talking about the incident on May 9.

May 8, 2022: California, Texas, Washington

Female protesters **disrupted Mass just before Communion** at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles, California. The women, dressed in red gowns and large white hats, began shouting and unfurled a banner before being escorted from the church.

In Katy, Texas, another tabernacle **was stolen overnight** from St. Bartholomew the Apostle Catholic Church on May 8. While an arrest was made in connection with the theft, the tabernacle remains missing.

Also in Texas, graffiti **reading** "Pro-choice is pro-life" was spray-painted on the front and side doors of Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Houston.

In Washington state, Post Millennial reporter Kate Davis court **captured** on video protesters laying on the steps of St. James Cathedral in Seattle with fake blood on

them to mimic coat hanger abortions during Mass. The incident **involved a heated confrontation** between a security guard and protesters, also captured in a **video posted online** by The Post Millennial.

(Story continues below)

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May 7, 2022: Colorado, New York

St. John XXIII parish in Fort Collins, Colorado, was **tagged with graffiti** on May 7, according to police. Messages including “My Body My Choice” and a symbol that appears to be an “A” signifying “anarchy” were written on the church. Some of the church’s exterior glass panels were also broken.

In New York City, **pro-abortion demonstrators rallied outside** Saint Patrick's Old Cathedral in Lower Manhattan. The protest disrupted a monthly pro-life procession from the church to the local Planned Parenthood. Among other things, a Franciscan friar was heckled, and a woman dressed in a stuffed bathing suit danced in front of the church while pretending to abort baby dolls.

The church’s pastor, Father Brian Graebe, later **told Fox News**, “We have received a number of threats to bomb the church, burn it down.”

May 3, 2022: Colorado

Sacred Heart of Mary Catholic Church, in Boulder, Colorado, **was defaced with pro-abortion slogans**, including “My Body, My Choice,” marking the second time in less than a year that the parish has been targeted with graffiti of this sort.

Tags: **Abortion, Catholic News, Church vandalism, Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization**



Katie Yoder is a correspondent in CNA's Washington, D.C. bureau. She covers pro-life issues, the U.S. Catholic bishops, public policy, and Congress. She previously worked for Townhall.com, National Review, and the Media Research Center.



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